

## Tomales Bay & Marin Miwok Selected Word List

Compiled by Sky Road Webb  
*Tamal-ko* / Tomales Bay Miwok

### ***Oppun Towis?***

This is the traditional *Tamal-ko*, or Tomales Bay Miwok greeting, and asks, “Are you being good?” The common reply is *Ka Towis*, “I’m good.”

*Tamal* is considered a direction word that means “west” or “coast.” The word *tamal* may even relate to the Chumash word for their off-shore canoe, the “*tomal*,” as the Point Reyes peninsula was an active pre-colonial sea-port for indigenous Pacific rim seafarers. The *ko* suffix means “people.” *Tamal-ko* could mean something like, “West Coast Boat People.”

Tomales is an Anglican variation of *Tamal*. Tomales Bay Miwok are the native peoples who lived for thousands of years on the Point Reyes peninsula (*Tamal Huya*), extending north along Tomales Bay (*Tamal Liwa*), south to *Bolinas*, and inland as far as Nicasio (*Etcha-Tamal*).

Tomales Bay Miwok, *Tamal-ko*, is part of the larger ethnographic and linguistic grouping now called Coast Miwok which also includes the Bodega Bay Miwok, *Ola-ment’-ko*, the Marin Miwok, *Huku-’iko*, and the *Leka-tiwut’-ko*, whose territory was from Freestone to Petaluma. There are dialectal nuances between these tribes, but they are generally considered to have spoken a common language.

Linguistically and culturally, Coast Miwok is related to the Lake Miwok from Middletown, the Bay Miwok of Contra Costa, the Ohlones of San Francisco and south to Monterey, the Plains Miwok of Central Valley, and the Northern, Central and Southern Miwok tribes along the Sierras including Yosemite.

Numerous place names in Marin still bare the Coast Miwok legacy. *Pais* means “hill or mountain,” and is remembered in the name of the sacred “West Coast Mountain,” *Tamalpais*. *Bolinas* is a Miwok place name, whose original pronunciation and meaning is uncertain. *Olema*, originally *Olema-loke*, means something like Coyote’s Valley (*ole* is a variation of coyote that appears in other Miwok dialects. *Loke* is a variation of *loklo*, for “valley”). *Kule Loklo*, or Bear Valley, is the site of the Coast Miwok demonstration village in Point Reyes National Seashore.

Needless to say, Coast Miwok is a highly endangered language. Preservation of this native tongue is indebted to anthropologists, linguists, and even some priests who gathered word lists in 1700 and 1800’s, then later recording audio on wax scrolls in first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. H. W. Henshaw, C. Hart Merriam, A. Kroeber, and Isabel Kelly are a few heroes for the language. The greatest champion for not just the Coast Miwok dialects, but all the Miwok languages is unquestionably Catherine A. Callaghan, Ph.D.

The English alphabet is not a perfect fit for recording the Miwok language. Consequently, those who recorded the language phonetically had to devise their own phonetic conventions. Comparing the various sources, some words may have been recorded with half a dozen different spellings. Close-to-

accurate articulation of a printed Miwok word is challenging without knowing who transcribed it and what methodology was used for the particular spelling.

The following lexicon hopes to be a practical tool and resource for learning or at least appreciating the Coast Miwok language. A modest attempt has been made to standardize the spelling in such a way that someone with an English phonetic background could (after reviewing the phonetic tips) be able to approximately articulate the Miwok word. Included are words from all the Coast Miwok dialects, but where able, favors the language spoken by the *Tamal-ko* and *Huku-’iko* (Tomales Bay and Marin Miwok).

**Walli Towis!** (Wishing the Great Good!)

**Phonetic tips:**

a	“a” as in “father”
ch	“ch” as in “church,” with the tongue pulled back
e	short “e” vowel, as in “egg”
h	“h” as in “hammer”
i	“ee” as in “keep”
k	“k” as in “skin”
l	“l” as in “let”
m	“m” as in “met”
n	“n” as in “net”
o	“o” as in “poke”
p	“p” as in “spin”
s	“s” sound, as in “trace,” with the tongue pulled back
sh	“sh” as in “should,” with the tongue pulled back
t	“t” as in “pith,” with the tongue pushed out through the teeth
tc	“ch” as in “chirp”, with the tongue pulled back
u	“oo” as in “shoot”
w	“w” as in “wet”
y	“y” as in “yet”
’	Glottal stops are a catch in the throat, similar to the two stops in the English word “uh-oh.” An apostrophe before a vowel indicates a glottal stop. As a general rule, if a word or syllable begins with a vowel, it is preceded by a glottal stop.
’	Apostrophes otherwise indicate syllable stress. Lengthen the vowel or consonant stressed.
Double letters	Where they appear, as in “ <i>Oppun</i> ,” stretch or drag out the length of the sound of the vowel or consonant, as a <i>one</i> -letter sound. As English readers unfamiliar with this convention are conditioned to pronounce both letters, an attempt has been made in this lexicon is to remove most of the double letters that appear in some resources, and replace with an apostrophe.

<b>Family</b>	<b>'i-ni'-'iko</b>
<b>They are all my relatives.</b>	<b>Mu'k-'am ka 'i-ni'iko.</b>
aunt (father's sister or by marriage)	'eneni
aunt (mother's sister)	'oyach:i
baby	'uti
babies	'uti-ko
brother, elder	'ata
brother, younger	'amo
child	'aay
children	'aay-ko
daughter	'aykoya
father	'api
grandchild	chacho
grandchildren	chacho-ko
grandfather	papa, papoyish
grandmother	hama
husband	'amta
man	taish
mother	'unu
person	mitcha
sister, elder	woko
sister, younger	'amo
son	'ayhena
uncle	kaaka
wife	kulesh
woman	kuleyish
<b>Pronouns</b>	
I	kani
my	ka
you, singular	mi
you, plural	miko
yours, singular	'un
yours, plural	mikon
ours, us two	'osh
ours, more than two	ma
they, them	'ikosh
us, we	mako'no
he, she, it	'ush
his, hers, its	'itin

<b>Directions</b>	
south	'olum
east	'ala
north	kanin, kanwin
west	tamal, helwa
down	hoime
up, sky	lile
center	kolwa
<b>Bird</b>	<b>meye</b>
bald eagle	lo-po-koi
barn swallow	pe'-ak
blackbird	chah'-pil'
blue jay	si'etch
chicken	kayi-n
chicken hawk	walinapi
condor	moluk
crow	'ahwe
dove, turtle	pu-i-yu
feathers	putte
fish hawk	haw'pah
golden eagle	li'-le mele
goldfinch	tu-pich
goose, Canada	la-wat
goose, white	wa'-u
great blue heron	'ale
hummingbird	kulupi
kingfisher	tca-ta'-lish
mallard duck	wat'-mal
meadowlark	hu-lu-mah
mudhen	tos'-koi
oriole	sa'-ku-sa'-ku
owl, great horned	tu-ku-li
owl, screech	wah-te
owl, spotted	we'-chik-kas
pelican, brown	'o-mai
pelican, white	sa-lol
pigeon, band-tail	'u-mu'-me
prairie falcon	wek-wek
raven	ka-kah'-lish
red shoulder black bird	lokou chahpil
red tail hawk	su'-yu
robin	sah-pah'-pe
sea gull	'o-e-yuk
shrew	hu-yu'-ke

Steller jay	wet'-te'-la
turkey buzzard	'akayah
valley quail	hek-hek-ke
widgeon, duck	ko-tu'-yu
woodpecker, California	pan'-nak
woodpecker, flicker	wol-lo'-lok
woodpecker, red headed	palatcak
<b>Animal</b>	<b>'animaal</b>
abalone	'a-wuk
ant	ho-lo'-tci
bat	nawa-winai
bear	kule
beaver	timi's
bobcat	to-lo'-mah'
cat	kush-kak
chipmunk	tca'-ti
clam	kuta
cottontail rabbit	no'-meh'
cougar	'o-puk'sho
cow	ba'-ka
coyote	'oye. 'oye 'oyish, "Old Man Coyote."
crab	'a-ma'-te
crane	'ale
deer, blacktail	choi-yek'-ke, also: kasum.
dog	hai-yu-sa
eel	tci'-pus
elk	tahn'-ta
fish	'e-le-wi
flea	ku-kush
fly	pa-tel-mis
frog	ko-to'-la
gopher	su'-wut
grasshopper	ka-to
gray fox	'ah-wah-ke
grey squirrel	sam-kow
ground squirrel	chi-te
hornet	mu-lu'-ta
horse	chah'-lah
jackrabbit	'au'-le
limpet	hus-ku-lu
lizard	petenya
louse	tcupshi
maggot	su-pit

mosquito	sai-i'-yeh
mouse	yu-se
oyster	u'-mush
raccoon	tu'-se
rattlesnake	ukulish
salamander	kotokowai
salmon	ka'-shi
sea lion	kaw'tah
seal	moi-yu
shrimp	huka
skunk	kah'-luk
snake	wa-ka-lay
spider	hai-tca'-la
starfish	tama
toad	ka-la'-la
turtle	mele'ya
weasel	lok'-kum
weasel	lok-kum
whale	pu'-shu
wolf	'o-mah-'o-la
wood rat	yu-lu
yellow jacket	menani
<b>Plants, wood, sticks</b>	<b>tu'mai</b>
acorn	'umpa
angelica californica	hutuli
berries	'ayum
black oak	kotis
buckeye tree	'ah'-te
California poppy	munkai
clover	sal
dogbane	tso'-poko
hazel	loo'-tah
iris, douglas	lawik
live oak	sah'-tah
madrone	kah'-kas
manzanita	tcilaka
mushrooms	'amaala
nuts	'ulla
pepperwood tree, California Bay Laurel	shaulas
pine	hu'-tush'
redwood tree	lu'me
roots	hullu
scrub oak	mule
soaproot	haka
stick	tumai

strawberry	'alum
tobacco	kai-yau'
tree	'alwas
tule	shap'a
valley oak	ha'-kiya
willow	kai'-ye
<b>body</b>	<b>me-'esh</b>
arm	ta-lik
back (of the body)	luma
beard	'u-tu
blood	ki'-tcau
bone	kolum
brain	pa'-shish
breath	he'na
chin	he'wa
ear	'a-lok
eye	shut
face	'oni
foot, toe, tracks	koyo
hair	mo'-lu
hand, fingers, paw	'ukush
head	mo-lu'
heart	wush-ki
knee	mo'ni
leg	ho-wol
lungs	poshol
mouth	lakum
neck	heleke
nipples	la-tcai
nose	huk
shoulder	'ai-yo-ish
teeth	kut
throat	tokani
tongue	lentip
<b>Created Things</b>	
arrow	lanta
awl	lushaya
ax	ha-tci
basket	'ewis

bow, gun, rifle	ko'-no
bullroarer	lawik
burden basket	tcika
cocoon rattle	tsoko' wai'i
dance house, roundhouse	kawul kotcha
digging stick	ka'ok
drum (foot drum)	tilen
house	kotcha
mortar	oto'ti
obsidian knife	hullaya
pestle	paiya
pump drill	tcidak
spear	hotci
split-stick rattle, clapper stick	shatum
stick dice, staves	lewa
stick for prying mussels and abalone	hoiye'n
string	ka'chen
cradle	sule
sweathouse, sweat lodge	lamma, also: wuki yomi (fire home)
tule boat	saka
Whistle, flute (single)	toka
whistle, double bone	lula
<b>Ground, World, Universe, Spirit of All Things</b>	<b>Weya</b>
ashes	yemi
beach	hewai
cloud	ya-kal
fire	wuki
lake, pond	puluk
lightening	ta'-kip
moon	pu-lu'-luk
mountain, hill	pais
ocean	kai-ya liwa
river	tcok
rock	lu'pu
salt	kai'-ya
sky	lile
smoke	kaal
spirit	hena
star	hiti
sun	hi
thunder	ta'lawa
valley	loklo
water	liwa
wind	kiwel
world	weya



<b>Place Names</b>	
Marshall	'etcha-kolum. 'etcha is a common prefix of Coast Miwok place names and means "behind." kolum means bone. "Behind the bone/s."
Nicasio valley	'etcha-tamal. "Behind Mt. Tamalpais."
Olema	originally, olema-loke. Ole is a variation of coyote that appears in other Miwok dialects. Loke is a variation of "loklo," for "valley". "Coyote Valley"
Point Reyes peninsula	tamal huye. "Bay Point."
San Geronimo Valley	sah-ta-ko. "Tan Bark Oak People"
Tamalpais, west mountain	tamal pais, "West Coast Mountain"
Tomales Bay	tamal Liwa. "West Coast Water"
Tomales Point	kulupi tamal. "Hummingbird Coast."
Valley Ford	'oye yomi. "Coyote's home."
<b>Colored</b>	<b>pin'tu</b>
black	loko'ta
blue	lu-tcu'-ta
dark	yute
green	si-wi'ta
light, bright	che'wa
red	kitcu'-lu
white	potola
yellow	'eleta
<b>count, to</b>	<b>met'-uti</b>
one	kenne
two	'osa
three	teleka
four	huya
five	kenekos
six	patcidak
seven	semlawi
eight	'osuya
nine	'unutos
ten	kitci
eleven	kenne wallik (increased)
twelve	osa wallik
thirteen	teleka wallik
fourteen	huya lilak (above)
fifteen	kenekos lilak
sixteen	patcidak lilak
seventeen	semlawi lilak

eighteen	'osuya lilak
nineteen	'unutas lilak
twenty	'osa kitci
twenty-one	'osa kitci kenne
twenty-two	'osa kitci osa
thirty	teleka kitci
forty	huya kitci
fifty	kenekos kitci
hundred	kitci-kitci

## Expressions

'Oppun Towis?	Hello, "Are you Doing good?"
Ka' towis.	Greeting Reply, "I'm good."
Towis hii	Good day
Towis 'ume	Good evening
Towis 'awwe	Good morning.
Towis kawul.	Good night.
Ka opia tahena	Farewell, "I'm going away."
Ka molish	Thank you, "I'm glad."
Ka wushkin shawa.	I'm sorry. "My heart aches."
'Eke'shu?	What is this?
Ni'shu....	This is ...
Waye'mi 'I'ti	Give me that.
Chama'mi 'I'ti	Take it Away
'Uu'	Yes
Hu'ma	No
Hi'nti 'opu 'un 'awe?	What is your name?
Ka 'awe-tak 'opu....	My name is ....
Hinti kachu 'opu 'un 'ona....?	How do you say...?
<b>Helpful words</b>	
What, How, Why	hi'nti. hi'nti ka'chu 'alwas 'opu 'iti? "What kind of tree is that?"
Present tense marker. It's happening now.	'opu, 'op'un
Very, great	Walli. walli towis! "Great good" / blessings
and, or	hee
Past tense modifier	Kaa, ka

Imperative. Turns a word into a command.	-mi (suffix). Chewapa'mi wuki. "Make the fire brighter / stoke up the fire."
<b>VERBS</b>	
count, to	met'-uti. ka met'uti kaa hiti. "I counted the stars."
cut, to	no'cha. ka no'cha 'opu ka'-shi. "I'm cutting the salmon." nocha'mi ko'le. "Cut the grass."
dance, to	ka'-wul. huna ka'wul. "Let's dance."
do, make, fix	hi'nak. ka hi'nak 'opu kotcha. "I'm building a house."
dream, to	sho'-li. towis sho'li. "Have good dreams."
hit	ka'lkuti. ka ka'lkuti ka 'alwatto. "I hit the tree."
knead, to	no'-ya. ka no'ya 'opu chip'a. "I'm kneading bread."
leave, to	'opyati. kush-kak ka 'opyati. "The cat left."
read, to	me'-tuti. me'tumi 'un pape'l. "Read your book."
rub, massage	lo'ya'ti. lo'ya'mi ka luma. "Rub my back."
sing, to	koya. meye opu koya. "The bird is singing."
sleep, to	'e'tc. 'e'tc-mi. Go to sleep.
stoke, light up	chewa'pa. 'iti 'untu chewa'pa kotcha. "It will light up the house."
tie, to	ka'len. ka ka'len ka 'iti kache'ntu. "I tied it up with string."

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